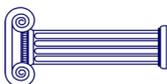


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CAS Negotiations, 2010-11: Newsletter

WLUFA
Wilfrid Laurier University
Faculty Association



Bargaining Unit Meeting: The Highs and Lows

Members of our bargaining unit squeezed themselves into a classroom in the Aird Building last Monday to get an update on the status of the negotiations for the Collective Agreement for CAS and Part-time Librarians.

Sheila McKee-Protopapas, chief negotiator for WLUFA, began the meeting by summarizing the proposals being negotiated in this round of bargaining, as well as giving a brief update as to where those proposals currently stand at the table. For a number of Members, this was their first chance to attend a meeting of the Bargaining Unit and to hear this information first-hand.

During the summary, McKee-Protopapas provided an overview of articles and individual clauses that have already been either signed-off (for articles) or agreed to (for clauses).

Negotiated improvements that will standardize CAS application and appointment procedures are considered to be a real step forward for our Members – many of whom find themselves receiving mixed information about whether or not a roster application is necessary every year, or who find themselves confused and frustrated by the sometimes ambiguous language of job postings.

According to McKee-Protopapas, standardized procedures to be used by part-time appointments committees will make the CAS appointments process more transparent for Members and, hopefully, less subjective for PTACs themselves. This was good news for many at the meeting, some of whom voiced their relief that these procedures will finally be more clearly laid-out.

Additional improvements to working environment have also been negotiated, with increased access to office space over the spring term, the possibility of increasing meeting room booking times (DAWB especially), and regular updating of computer equipment in CAS offices.

This positive news, however, could not outweigh the negotiating team's report that some of the most important issues for CAS – job security, benefits and compensation – have yet to be settled.

Even more discouraging was the news that the University seems to be completely unwilling to engage in any discussion of our proposals for member-based seniority and improved access to employment.

This news garnered much heated discussion in the room, with many long-serving Members adding stories of their ever-increasing workload due to the “collapsing” of courses and of their constant worry about what the next term or year holds for them as instructors.

Following this there was discussion in which a number of Members advocated a range of strategies for our bargaining unit. The chief negotiator informed Members that the team would continue to negotiate and would first utilize “all other options”, including conciliation and mediation – possibly even arbitration – before the consideration of job action, though she also noted that job action is always a possible outcome of any negotiations process.

With the understanding that this process is, indeed, beginning to draw to its natural conclusion, Members present at the meeting called for more frequent update meetings. All present agreed that, at this point, Member input is becoming crucial and that well-attended meetings will be key to providing our negotiating team with clear “go –forward” messages.

The two-hour meeting ended with McKee-Protopapas making a call to the Members present to help with the negotiations Strategy Committee, which has been short-staffed since talks began. Thankfully, a few Members did step forward after the meeting to offer their help.

The negotiating team, however, is still in need of Members who are willing to either serve on the committee or to act as liaisons in their departments. If you would like to lend a hand in some way, please contact Linda Watson in the WLUFA Office (lwatson@wlu.ca).

Future meetings of the Bargaining Unit are being planned. Please keep an eye out for these newsletters and for posted notices in your department.

Questions or comments?

Contact Denise Davis-Gains, WLUFA communications coordinator: ddavisgains@wlu.ca

Maintaining a Quality Administration?

In a recent interview with *The Cord* ("Maintaining a Quality Education", vol. 51, #18), Jim Butler, VP Finance and Administration, is quoted as saying that while "there has been an increase to central administrative costs", these costs are commensurate not with the costs of faculty, but with enrolment growth: "central hiring is no different than faculty or any other administrative hiring which is pretty much commensurate with enrolment growth".

It is difficult to understand how a decrease in the percentage of university budget devoted to faculty salaries can be commensurate with enrolment growth. This is, however, what the numbers suggest.

While administration costs have increased as a percentage of university budget, faculty costs have decreased from 64.2% in 1987/88 to 57.6% (*The Cord*, 51, #18).

What might help explain this is that an average of two new Central Administrative positions have been added for each of the last five years with three being added in the last year alone.

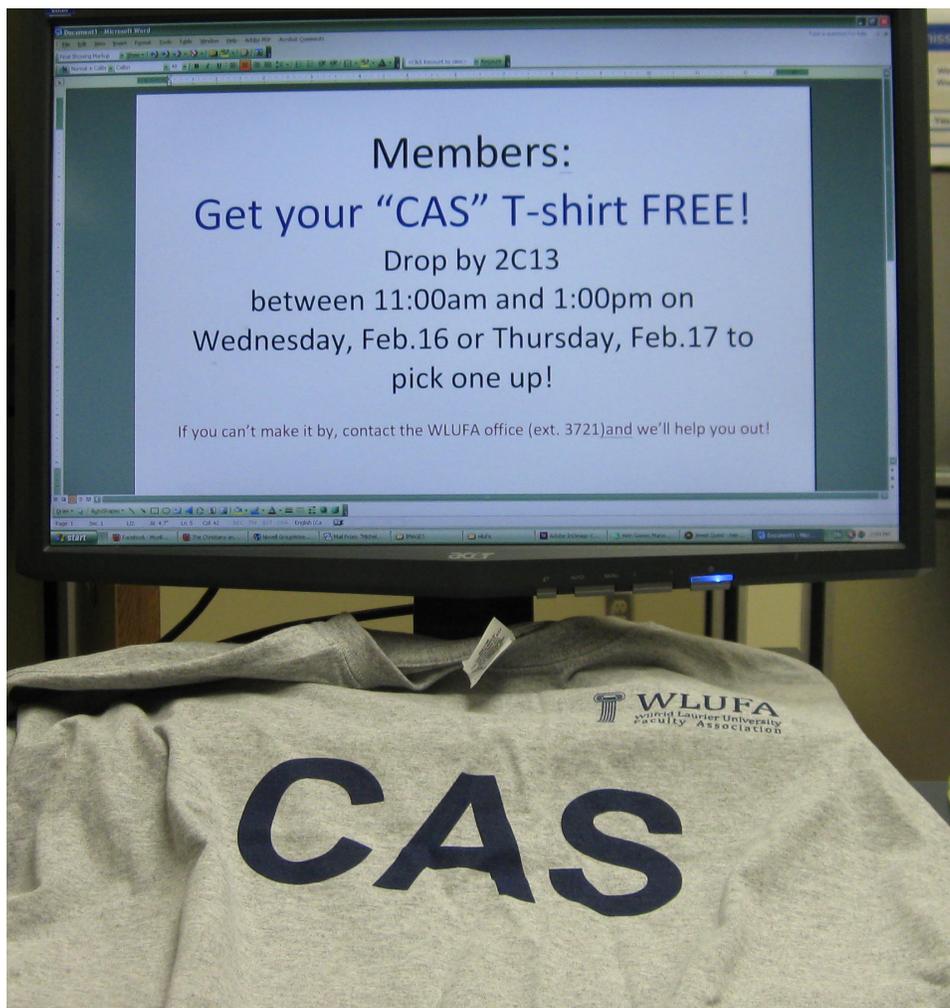
This is pretty much commensurate with the numbers for Canada. According to CAUT, between 1998 and 2009, faculty salary costs decreased from about 46% to about 39%, while costs for administration increased from about 36% to 37%.

What this has meant for CAS members is increased class size, fewer tutorials and decreased job security because of fewer course offerings.

In the midst of what the Administration is calling a crisis, it would seem that everything should be done to enhance the student experience by sustaining class sizes and the quality and morale of faculty, both full-time and CAS.

Don't let the talk of crisis deter you; get involved and support your bargaining team!

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Strategy Committee Member Contacts

At any time, feel free to contact a member of the Strategy Committee with questions, input, or suggestions during the negotiations:

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